

# PROPOSALS

*Humbly offered to the Consideration of the KING and PARLIAMENT,  
for increasing His Majesties Revenue, with a great Ease and Benefit to the Subject.*

**T**HAT whereas by an Injunction, *Anno 35 Hen. 8.* it was, for divers weighty Reasons, ordered and appointed, That the Church-wardens of every Parish throughout *England, Wales and Ireland*, should keep a Book for the entering the exact and true Time of all Christnings, Marriages and Burials, that should yearly happen in the respective Parishes of every County, and be there kept in every Church from Age to Age, for the resolving such Doubts, and redressing such Inconveniencies as often arise upon the Uncertainty of the Time when such Christnings, Marriages, &c. were solemnized: That notwithstanding the good Design and Intent of the said Injunction, sundry Inconveniencies have happened, and do daily arise through the notorious Neglect of the due Observance of an Order of such vast Consequence; (*viz.*) I. The embezzling the Registers, or Books of Records, by Church Wardens and Parish-Clerks, whose Livelihood (in some places) depending only on the Income of a small Tippling-House, or Ale-house, exposeth them to those Mischiefs as several Families have cause to lament. II. The Loss of them by Fire, or the Death of the Person to whose Custody they were committed. III. The great Expence and Difficulty in searching after the exact Time of the Celebration of such Marriages, Christnings, &c. And, Lastly, The great Detriment and Loss does frequently accrue (from the Uncertainties of such Registers, so unduly kept) in matters of Law, and otherwise; whereby the End of so useful an Injunction is wholly perverted.

It is therefore humbly offered, That for reforming and redressing such Abuses and Inconveniencies, as aforesaid, an *Act of Parliament* (~~should be made~~) be made for a *General Register-Office*, to be constituted and appointed in or about *London*, and one particular subordinate Office in every respective County throughout *England and Wales*, for the due entering and registering on Record the certain Days and Times such Christnings, Marriages and Burials, as shall yearly happen in every respective Parish; and that the several Church-Wardens and Parish-Clerks be obliged to make a Return of such Christnings, &c. to the said *General Register-Office*, once in every year, whereto all persons may have recourse, in Cases doubtful, or otherwise.

*The CONVENIENCIES that naturally arise to the Subject from this Office, are very great and considerable, (viz.)*

- I. The many Abuses of those that have Two Wives, or more, will be the easilier discovered, and the sooner remedied.
- II. The true committing of Administrations to the next of Kin, will be more perfectly understood, and justly disposed of.
- III. The Non-age of all Infants will be known, that sell their Lands, and enter into Bonds, &c. Assurances of Debt, during their Minority.
- IV. All Frauds and Perjuries (many whereof are at this day in question, notwithstanding the late Act made to prevent them) will be hereby avoided.
- V. The Places certain will be known, where the Poor were born, and what Parish ought to relieve them.
- VI. A manifest Proof will be hereby made of the Natural born Subjects of this Realm of *England and Wales*, and of Aliens and Strangers; whereby that common Fraud at this day, and formerly practised, will be prevented, when they endeavoured to shift off the Payment of Duties upon Imported Goods, as Denizens; as also the Double Subsidy, when Supplies to the Crown were in that manner granted: As likewise for laying claim to other Rights and Inheritances contrary to the meaning of the Law.
- VII. A more undoubted Proof may be made of the Age of a Party that bringeth a *Writ of Error* to reverse a Fine or Recognizance, or Vouchee of a Recovery, which is usually done by Inspection; *viz.* by the Judge's seeing the Party, and giving his determinate Judgment of his Age; a practice altogether uncertain, as well as deceitful; because, although the God-fathers or Parents do attest the Age of the Party at the Time of the Fine or Recognizance acknowledged, as aforesaid, yet such their Allegations shall be of no credit, but shall be left to the Judgment of the Judge, which may prove as fallible as the Parties Age is doubtful. Whereas an exact Register would be of greater Authority than such a questionable Inspection of a Judge.

*The INCREASE of His Majesties Revenue, from this Office, will be greater.*

- I. If it be enacted, That at the time of Registering of the Christning of every Child, the Parent or Parents of the said Child shall be obliged to pay one penny in the pound of the Real, as also one penny in the pound of the Personal Estate, that the said Parent shall be seized and possess of at the Time of the Birth of the said Infant. Provided, the said Parent shall be worth 10 *l.* personal Estate, or 5 *l.* per Annum real Estate: Otherwise the common and accustomed Rates to be paid.
- II. That every Man at the Time of his Marriage shall pay one penny per pound that he shall have and receive of his Wives Dowry or Portion, both of her real and personal Estate, according to the aforesaid Limitations concerning Christnings.
- III. That every Executor or Administrator of any person that dies, shall, after Funeral Charges and Debts satisfied, pay one penny in the pound out of every pound of the yearly Value of the Real, and so proportionably of the personal Estate of the Deceased, at the time of his Burial, if his real Estate amounts to 5 *l.* per annum, and his personal to 10, as aforesaid: Otherwise the usual Duties to be paid.

Which said payments made as above, will, by a modest computation, amount, towards the Augmentation of their Majesties Revenue, to 100000 *per annum*, or thereabouts.

*Obj. I.* But it may be objected, That this Register will prove of very ill consequence to the Subject, in that it discovers, and lays open the Value of every person's Estate, and thereby exposes the Reputation of Men of Dealing and Trade.

*Answ.* It will make no new Discovery now, because all Estates, both real and personal, are, or ought to have been discovered by former Acts of Parliament; and the late Acts for *Poll-Money*, and the Land-Tax, puts it out of dispute.

*Obj. II.* That this Office of Registry will prejudice the present Registers of the said Christnings, Marriages, &c. and all others depending on the said Registry, and who derive their profits from it; and seems to intrench on the Jurisdiction of the Prerogative Courts, and those of the Bishops.

*Answ.* That it will in no wise intrench on the just Jurisdictions of the said Courts, nor injure the Bishops common Register, nor any person therein concerned; because the Time of the Birth, Marriage, and Death, and who is Heir, is only tryable by the Common Law, and not by Certificate of the Ordinary. Besides, the Ordinaries, Parish-Clerks, &c. shall be allowed their usual and accustomed Fees, notwithstanding this Register.